

What is claimed is:

1. A method for a first server to select content to be displayed on a computer accessing a Web site of a second server, comprising the steps of:

collecting user identification data from the computer accessing the Web site;

5 sending the collected user identification data to the first server;

retrieving user information corresponding to the user identification data from a database of user information accessible to the first server;

applying the retrieved user information to a rule base including a plurality of rules;

10 selecting content to be displayed on the second server's Web site based upon a result of the application of the retrieved user information to at least one of the plurality of rules, and causing the Web site to display the selected content to the accessing computer.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of rules is customizable.

15 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the user identification data is included in at least one file stored on the accessing computer.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the at least one file is configured as a cookie.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the causing step includes a step of sending the selected content to the second server.

20 6. The method of Claim 5, wherein the second server further carries out a step of integrating the selected content into the Web site displayed to the user.

7. The method of Claim 5, wherein the second server further carries out a step of transmitting the selected content to the accessing computer and wherein a browser running on

the accessing computer integrates the selected content into a currently displayed page of the Web site.

8. The method of Claim 7 wherein the transmitting step is carried out via HTTP and TCP/IP.

5 9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the causing step includes a step of sending to the second server an address of the selected content.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the second server carries out a step of fetching the selected content at the address sent by the first server and integrating the fetched selected content into a currently displayed page of the Web site.

10 11. The method of Claim 9, wherein the second server sends the address of the selected content to the accessing computer and wherein the accessing computer fetches the selected content at the address sent by the second server and integrates the fetched selected content into a currently displayed page of the Web site.

15 12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the content includes at least one of an advertisement, a product recommendation and a link to another Web site.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the selected content includes a combination of the product recommendation and a deep link into said another Web site where the recommended product is featured.

20 14. The method of Claim 1, wherein an applicability of at least one of the plurality of rules of the rule base is selectively limited by at least one parameter.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the at least one parameter includes time, date, geography, age, sex, income level, browser type and record of past purchases or inquiries.

16. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of updating the database of user information based upon an activity of a user of the accessing computer.

17. The method of Claim 1, wherein the sending step sends a request for the selected content along with the collected user identification data.

5 18. A system comprising:

a merchant Web server;

an affiliate Web server, the affiliate Web server being coupled to the merchant Web server over a computer network;

a database of user information accessible to the merchant Web server;

10 a rule base including a plurality of configurable rules, the rule base being accessible to the merchant Web server;

a first process to collect a user identification from a computer accessing a Web site controlled by the affiliate Web server and for sending the collected user identification to the merchant Web server along with a request for content;

15 a second process for retrieving user information from the database corresponding to the collected user identification, and

a third process for applying user information obtained from the database to the plurality of rules and for returning selected content to the affiliate Web server in response to the request for content, the returned content being selected based upon a result of applying
20 the user information to the plurality of rules.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the user identification data is included in at least one file stored on the accessing computer.

20. The system of Claim 19, wherein the at least one file is configured as a cookie and wherein the first process is configured to retrieve the cookie from the accessing computer.

21. The system of Claim 18, wherein the third process is further configured to
5 send the selected content to the affiliate Web server.

22. The system of Claim 18, wherein the affiliate Web server is further configured to integrate the selected content into the Web site displayed to the user.

23. The system of Claim 21, wherein the affiliate Web server is further configured to transmit the selected content to the accessing computer and wherein a browser running on
10 the accessing computer is configured to integrate the selected content into the Web site displayed to the user.

24. The system of Claim 23 wherein the affiliate Web server is configured to transmit the selected content via HTTP and TCP/IP.

25. The system of Claim 18, wherein the selected content includes an address of
15 content to be displayed on a Web site controlled by the affiliate Web server.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein the affiliate Web server is further configured to fetch the content at the address sent by the third process and integrating the fetched content into a currently displayed page of the Web site.

27. The system of Claim 25, wherein the affiliate Web server is further configured
20 to send the address of the content to the accessing computer and wherein the accessing computer is configured to fetch the content at the address sent by the affiliate Web server and to integrate the fetched content into a currently displayed page of the Web site.

28. The system of Claim 18, wherein the selected content includes at least one of an advertisement, a product recommendation and a link to another Web site.

29. The system of Claim 28, wherein the selected content includes a combination of the product recommendation and a deep link into said another Web site where the recommended product is featured.

30. The system of Claim 18, wherein an applicability of at least one of the plurality of rules of the rule base is selectively limited by at least one parameter.

31. The system of Claim 30, wherein the at least one parameter includes time, date, geography, age, sex, income level, browser type and record of past purchases or inquiries.

32. The system of Claim 18, further including a fourth process to update the database of user information based upon an activity of a user of the accessing computer.

33. The system of Claim 18, wherein the first process also collects, from the accessing computer, a request for the selected content along with the collected user identification data.

34. The system of Claim 18, further including a rules engine configured to enable each of the plurality of rules to be customized and configured to enable a creation of new rules.

35. A method of delivering personalized content from a first server to a computer accessing a second server, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request for the personalized content from the accessing computer, the accessing computer having accessed a Web page that includes embedded code configured to

send the request for personalized content to the first server over a computer network along with selected user identification data;

retrieving user information corresponding to at least one of the user identification data and the accessed Web page from a database of user information accessible to the first server;

5 applying the retrieved user information to a rule base including a plurality of rules;

selecting content to be posted in the accessed Web page based upon a result of the application of the retrieved user information to at least one of the plurality of rules, and

sending at least one of the selected content and an address of the selected content to the accessing computer for posting into the accessed Web page.

10 36. The method of Claim 35, wherein at least one of the plurality of rules is customizable.

37. The method of Claim 35, wherein the user identification data is included in at least one file stored on the accessing computer.

15 38. The method of Claim 37, wherein the at least one file is configured as a cookie and wherein the receiving step receives user identification data collected from the cookie stored on the accessing computer.

39. The method of Claim 35, wherein the receiving step is carried out via HTTP and TCP/IP.

20 40. The method of Claim 35, wherein the selected content includes at least one of an advertisement, a product recommendation and a link to another Web site.

41. The method of Claim 40, wherein the selected content includes a combination of the product recommendation and a deep link into said another Web site where the recommended product is featured.

42. The method of Claim 37, wherein an applicability of at least one of the plurality of rules of the rule base is selectively limited by at least one parameter.

43. The method of Claim 42, wherein the at least one parameter includes time, date, geography, age, sex, income level, browser type and record of past purchases or
5 inquiries.

44. The method of Claim 37, further comprising the step of updating the database of user information based upon an activity of the accessing computer.

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